

# What constitutes a mouse problem?

The common mouse (*Mus musculus*) is an introduced pest distributed widely across Australia. They can cause enormous economic damage to cereal and pulse crops, in orchards, horticultural situations, and fodder storages around the farm.



## Plagues vs economic damage

The term "mouse plague" conjures up the thought of thousands or even millions of mice running across roads, scurrying through sheds and causing total destruction of newly sown crops.

Economic damage to crops from mice however starts much earlier than the catastrophic numbers of a plague - often before they start to be seen crossing the roads or before all the seed in a paddock is destroyed.

Mice can cause problems at all stages of crop development from eating freshly sown seed, damaging early growth stages to chewing seed pods or heads off ready-to-harvest plants. Newly emerging seedlings are not only eaten, but the high protein feed can also trigger breeding again if climatic conditions suit.

**One adult mouse requires 2-3 grams of food per day (about 100 grains of wheat).  
200 mice eat the equivalent amount of feed as one sheep.  
1,000 mice per hectare have the potential to eat 5% of a freshly sown crop per night.**

## Beware! Mice numbers as low as 200 per hectare can cause significant economic damage.

There is no definitive answer to accurately predict the potential damage from mice, however it is now widely accepted that early recognition of the presence of mice and the early treatment of the problem is the best approach.

## Simple options to help identify mouse numbers

### Identifying mouse holes

Walk in a straight line for 100m and count the number of active holes within a 1m width. If you have 5 holes per 100m, assuming 2 mice per hole, you could have as many as 10 mice per 100m<sup>2</sup>, equivalent to 1,000 mice per hectare. (1ha = 10,000m<sup>2</sup>)

### Identifying active holes.

Walk the 100m transect and mark around the holes with talcum powder (see picture). Next morning, walk the transect again, and count the number of holes where the talcum powder has been disturbed. Again assume 2 mice per hole. If you have 2 active holes you may have as many as 400 mice/Ha.

**Note: After working ground and/or sowing, any open holes are probably active.**

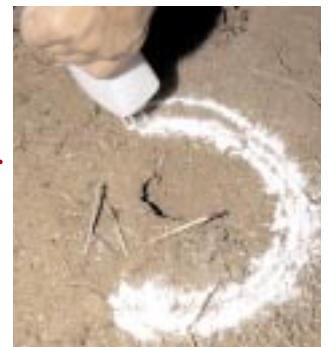
### Mouse Runways

Mouse holes with runways typically indicate large mouse populations. These holes *could* contain 5 or more mice. Holes with 10 or more are not uncommon.

### Canola Cards

Place 10 x 10cm paper squares soaked in canola oil at 10m intervals across a transect. Pads of cards are available from Animal Control Technologies. Soak pads overnight in canola oil and peg in paddock with wire or tent peg next night. (Graph paper with 1cm squares can also be used.)

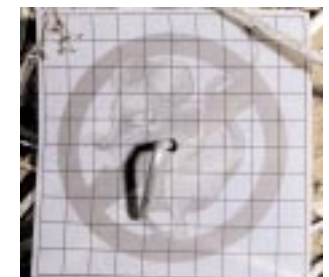
Check next morning. If an average of 5% or more of the card is eaten (i.e 5 squares on the sheet) significant mouse activity is emerging and baiting may be required. See cards below for examples...



**Applying talc to a hole**



**A mouse hole with active runways**



**Peg down canola cards**



**Beware! Mouse problem emerging. Consider baiting**

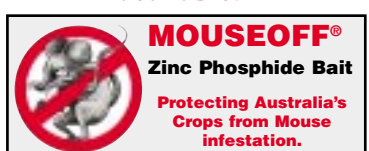


**Treat immediately if crop is at vulnerable stage**



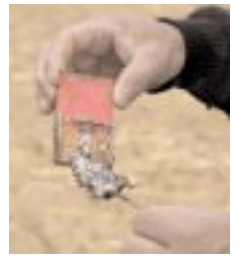
**You have a major problem & the crop is being damaged.**

**NOTE:**  
Canola cards can **underestimate** a problem if there is abundant alternative feed sources available.



## Trapping

Place 10 standard mouse traps baited with cardboard soaked in canola oil at 10m intervals along transects in the paddock. Check early the next morning (before the birds take the mice out of the traps). If at any time more than 10% of the traps are holding mice there is potential for significant crop damage. Young or pregnant females signify a worsening problem.



**Repeat trapping regularly to monitor mice numbers**

## Communicate

Talk with neighbours, agronomists, local rural merchants or local government pest agency about the emerging mouse problem so they can assemble a local district overview of the problem. Do not rely on others as your problem may be worse than others. Not everybody needs to have mouse problems for your crop to be suffering significant damage.

## Treatment

MOUSEOFF® Zinc Phosphide Bait is a pre-prepared, sterilised whole wheat bait. When applied at a rate of 1kg/ha it will treat effectively mouse infestations of any severity. It is available in 15kg pails or 125kg drums.



MOUSEOFF® ZP is a schedule 7 poison and requires the necessary permits for purchase and use in some states (eg an ACUP in Victoria). MOUSEOFF® ZP can be purchased from any licenced S7 rural merchant distributor.

### Application

It can be successfully spread with slug bait spreaders or through aerial contractors for broadacre applications

### Approximate cost per hectare

MOUSEOFF® ZP should cost about \$11.00/Ha (plus the costs of application).



**4 x 125kg drums/pallet**  
**32 x 15kg pails/pallet**

## Baiting options for around Farm Sheds

**MOUSEOFF® Zinc Phosphide is an in-crop rodenticide and is not registered for use around farm sheds and grain storages.**

**MOUSEOFF® Bromadiolone bait is the partner to MOUSEOFF® ZP.**

MOUSEOFF® Bromadiolone is for use around farm sheds and homesteads. It kills mice and rats.



MOUSEOFF® Bromadiolone is available in 100g and 200g chew-through sachets, 200g & 400g bottles and 2kg & 8kg pails. Mouseoff Bromadiolone is Australia's only whole-grain wheat bait for mice.

*Ask for MOUSEOFF® Bromadiolone Rodent Bait at leading rural merchant stores or contact ACTA for more information.*

*Trade enquiries welcome - (03) 9308 9688.*



**MOUSEOFF® Bromadiolone is Australia's only whole grain bait.**

## For more information, technical booklets and Canola card pads.

For more information contact Animal Control Technologies. The GRDC supported 32-page MOUSEOFF® ZP booklet explains procedures to improve mouse management on your land and describes the best practice application of MOUSEOFF® Zinc Phosphide bait should you need to treat the problem.

**Phone: (03) 9308 9688 • Fax: (03) 9308 9622**

**Email enquiries@animalcontrol.com.au**

**Website: animalcontrol.com.au**



# MOUSEOFF®

## Zinc Phosphide Bait

**Protecting Australia's Crops**

Another quality product from the makers of RABBAIT® Oat Bait, FOXOFF® Fox Bait, DOGGONE® Wild Dog Bait  
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